855 [264] danger from cannibals. If enemy raiders did catch a roving child, he was certain to be eaten or sacrificed. Children under [782] four years were not tortured but if offered as sacrifices were simply strangled and taken to the sacred place in the hills, where they were hung up with hooks through the mouth and offered to the gods in this way.

The child, then, was under supervision all the time, usually by the secondary husbands. The man would go about his work, keeping an eye on the infant. The child was played with occasionally when the adult was not too busy, but there was no constant attention. The child found early in life that it got nowhere by yelling, for if the adults were busy, they just let it [839] cry. However, if the child became too troublesome, an adult might quiet it by masturbating it. The masturbation of female children began very early; in fact, from the moment of birth there was systematic manipulation of the labia to elongate [832] them, as elongation was considered a mark of beauty.

861 There was little discipline, and as has been said before, no discipline whatsoever for the eldest child. There was, however, constant danger from taboo infractions, the supposed dangers from ogres, and the real danger of cannibals. The terror which adults felt when a child got out of sight was genuine, and, of course, strongly affected the emotional response of the child. The child was not intimidated or coerced, but it was impressed upon him that if he wandered away, he would be in constant danger, from which only the adult could protect him. The supervision, however, was of a rather diffused sort. The danger stressed was not in being away from any particular person but in being alone. No economic responsibility of any sort was imposed on the child before puberty. The child was not taught any arts or crafts, but led an entirely carefree existence.

857 When the youngsters were eight or ten they began to form into gangs. Both girls and boys were in such groups; more boys than girls because of the before-mentioned sex ratio. The unit was vaguely defined, and was composed of children born within three or four years of one another, with occasionally

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Each boy keeps the sliver of bamboo over which the foreskin was stretched for the incision. Should the slip be lost or be stolen by another and be thrown into mud or a stream, early impotency will result for the original owner of the slip. [833] The slip should be carefully buried upright in dry ground in an area where many women will walk over it. Obviously, as one informant stated, the best place to "bury the bamboo" is in the churchyard where all the girls congregate several times weekly. A boy knows when a girl has been standing [831] above his bamboo, for an erection follows particularly quickly upon the sight of that girl. According to an informant, the churchyard in one of the main valleys of Nuku Hiva is filled with buried bamboo slips of the last several generations, all [797] placed without missionary knowledge.

At present, after a boy has been circumcised, he may 836 be considered to possess the social seal of approval to begin 881 heterosexual activities in /29/ earnest. It is considered to 884 be a rather unbecoming precocity for boys to have intercourse before circumcision, although many of the late adolescent males will attempt to convince the outsider that they have done so.

There appears to be a great deal of anxiety among male 152 children regarding circumcision. Adults will often threaten 861 very young male children who are badly behaved by brandishing one of the ever-present butchering knives and gesturing toward the child's genitalia with the statement: "'Ena 'e kokoti 'au 'i to'o e moa!" (I'm going to hack your penis!) This threat usually produces striking results: the child seizes his genitalia bending over forward to protect them and backs away, at the point of tears if not actually screaming. A knife which I always carried was often mentioned as "the [123] white man's knife for circumcising children," which drew me involuntarily into the situation.

Girls generally begin their heterosexual relations much 836 earlier than do the boys in the Marquesas. Their relatively earlier sexual maturation and the fact that puberty for them is not marked by an obstacle such as circumcision makes their